

January 22, 2016

Dear President Dennis Williams,

We, the rank and file union members of Western Massachusetts Labor for Palestine and the GEO/UAW 2322 Palestine Solidarity Caucus, unequivocally support UAW Local 2865's democratic vote to endorse Palestinian civil society's call to Boycott Divest from and Sanction Israel (BDS).

UAW 2865's vote is just one of hundreds of similar decisions worldwide that have been celebrated as courageous acts of refusing business as usual with Israel as it engages in war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and the construction of what Bishop Desmond Tutu, and many other prominent advocates for human rights, have called an apartheid state.

We urge you to reinstate the vote, which was found to be democratic and free of any misconduct. UAW IEB should not succumb to false accusations of anti-Semitism made in the interest of protecting an apartheid system that perpetuates the oppression of Palestinians.

Labor unions and workers have been at the forefront of social justice struggles worldwide; the UAW, in particular has a long history of standing against apartheid. As we are sure you know, in 1979, the UAW won union control over pension investments and discouraged GM, Ford and Chrysler from investing in South African companies that supported apartheid. Soon after, union members from a number of large manufacturing locals voted to divest their pension funds from South African companies.

As rank and file union members, we support the call from Palestinian civil society, including all of its major trade unions, for BDS.

We stand with UAW 2865 and its support of the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. We urge you to reverse your decision, in the interests of the most basic standards of union democracy, and to send a clear signal that the US labor movement does not support apartheid.

In solidarity,

Western Massachusetts Labor for Palestine
And
GEO/UAW 2322 Palestine Solidarity Caucus

A sampling of individual signatories that reflect the diverse affiliations of our memberships:

Ruth Jennison, MSP MTA/NEA
Jordy Rosenberg, MSP MTA/NEA
Priscilla Lynch, SEIU Local 509
Anna Waltman GEO/UAW Local 2322
Sean Gordon GEO/UAW Local 2322
Neelofer Qadir GEO/UAW Local 2322